

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION'S

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

**OPERATING PLAN for
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
2007 - 2008**

Working Together to Save Lives



People with Disabilities Employment Program Operating Plan FY 2007 - FY 2008

People with Disabilities (PWD) represent over 19.3% of the U.S. population or over 49.7 million people, and rank as one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. population. President George W. Bush announced the New Freedom Initiative in February 2001. The Initiative was designed to eliminate barriers to full integration into American life that many of this Nation's citizens with disabilities still face.

NOAA's National Weather Service is committed to enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. NWS wants to increase the representation of qualified PWD in all levels of its workforce. Six percent of the National Civilian Labor Force (NCLF) and 5% of the NWS workforces are PWDs. NWS goal is to meet and exceed the NCLF. The NWS PWD Employment Program was designed to ensure individuals with disabilities enjoy equal opportunity in all aspects of employment within NWS, including hiring, promotions and reasonable accommodation. This PWD Operating Plan has been developed as a roadmap to assist in meeting these goals.

PWD can be hired through the traditional competitive hiring process or, if they qualify, noncompetitively through the use of excepted service appointing authorities. Excepted service appointing authorities for hiring individuals with disabilities were developed to provide an opportunity for PWD to show that they can do the job and to circumvent the attitudinal barriers of managers and supervisors.

This PWD Employment Program Operating Plan (PWDEPOP) is tied to the overall NWS Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management. The Diversity Management Operating Plan and the PWDEPOP will be institutionalized in all facets of NWS operations. Through this plan, the NWS seeks to build relationships with the disabilities community and engage them in the NWS scientific and technical operations. The plan calls for strengthening the NWS outreach activities in a comprehensive effort to promote partnership opportunities with the disability community in the critical areas: employment, training, and education.

This plan seeks to recruit talented candidates from outside the NWS, retain, promote, develop current employees, create a pipeline for addressing current and future workforce needs, and to make management aware of the barriers to senior level positions.

FY 2007-2008 Goals

Goal	Lead Office	Completion
Develop PWD Employment Program web page and announce completion to NWS family.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2008
Identify college students with disabilities interested in hydrology, meteorology, engineering and physical science at the NWS.	OEODM and DOL - WRP	Quarter III - FY2007
Contact Regions and discuss PWDEPOP.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2007
Initiate dialogue to establish long-term relationships with PWD advocacy groups, professional organizations, colleges and universities.	OEODM	Quarter I - FY2008
Make local high school students with disabilities aware of NWS Intern Programs (i.e. METCON).	OEODM	Quarter II - FY2007
Identify and assess utilization of current entry-level intern programs to develop diverse groups of professional, administrative, and scientific trainees.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2008
Create/monitor PWD informal mentoring program for employees in all occupations.	OEODM	Quarter IV - FY2007
Review GS-13, 14, 15, and SES search and placement procedures and ensure effective outreach tools are utilized to actively recruit qualified PWD candidates for senior-level positions.	OEODM – Workforce Management Office (WFMO)	Quarter II - FY2008
Obtain regional reports and monitor PWDEP.	OEODM	Quarter IV - FY2007

Goal A: Enhance/Develop Employee Potential

1. Develop PWDEP webpage and announce completion to NWS family.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review current web page and update to reflect goals of PDEPOP by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

2. Identify college students with disabilities interested in hydrology, meteorology, engineering and physical science at the NWS.

Lead Office: DOL, WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review DOL WRP database and make data available to NWS managers at all levels by end of Quarter III - FY2007.

3. Ensure that the requirements in vacancy announcements and the language in ranking factors are not restrictive or biased in nature; areas of consideration are broadened, where possible and review “status only” requirement.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review vacancy announcement language and procedures by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

4. Contact regions and discuss PWDEPOP.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Receive regions input on how each region will implement plan to fit their needs by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

5. Initiate dialogue to establish long-term relationships with PWD advocacy groups and organizations.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Initiate dialogue with a minimum of three People with Disabilities organizations by end of Quarter I - FY2008.

6. Identify and target institutions that graduate a significant number of students with disabilities with degrees that meet NWS job needs. Partner with these institutions to identify students interested in the NWS.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Develop list of viable candidates by end of Quarter I - FY2008.

7. Research NWS recruitment strategies used to target PWD through professional organizations, colleges, and universities.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Create a PWD employment communications plan and initiate dialogue with a minimum of four major PWD publications and organizations by end of Quarter I - FY2008.

8. Identify existing High School Intern Programs that prepare students for jobs and careers in the NWS and create awareness of these programs among local school systems.

Lead Office: OEODM in coordination with local school districts

Completion: Develop partnerships with three local school systems and secure their participation in existing NWS internship programs by end of Quarter II - FY2008.

9. Identify and assess utilization of current entry-level intern programs to develop diverse groups of professional, administrative, and scientific trainees.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review and assess intern programs statistical data by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

10. Establish informal mentoring program for interested PWD employees.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Identify mentors and mentorees by end of Quarter IV - FY2008.

11. Review GS-13, 14, 15, and SES search and placement procedures and ensure effective outreach tools are utilized to actively recruit qualified PWD candidates for senior-level positions.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Make recommendations to WFMO, directors and managers for correcting any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2008.

12. Ensure that EEO Managers report their participation on NWS administered Selection Review Boards and SES Selection Panels.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review procedures on boards and selection panels and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter IV - FY2008.

13. Create awareness among NWS recruitment personnel about the wide variety of PWD recruitment sources that can yield potential GS-13, 14, 15, and SES applicants.

Lead Office: OEODM and WFMO

Completion: Initiate dialogue for ensuring a pool of qualified applicants, with PWD executive-level organizations by end of Quarter II - FY2006.

14. Create awareness among high-potential NWS PWD employees of GS-13, 14, 15, and SES opportunities.

Lead Office: OEODM and WFMO

Completion: Create an SES awareness campaign by end of Quarter II - FY2009.

15. Create awareness among NWS PWD employees of existing executive/leadership training programs.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review PWD participation data for leadership and executive training programs by end of Quarter II - FY2008.

16. Identify and promote awareness of government-wide and NWS executive development training programs among high-potential PWD candidates in order to increase opportunities for inclusion in GS-13, 14, 15 and SES selection pools.

Lead Office: OEODM and WFMO

Completion: Create an awareness campaign by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

Goal B: Improve Retention

1. Review exit interview procedures, questionnaires, and data for PWD employees and make recommendations for improvement.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review existing procedures, questionnaires, and data continuously.

2. Review internal employment practices undertaken to retain PWD employees (e.g., use of retention bonuses, awards, promotions, etc.).

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review retention data and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2008.

Goal C: Disseminate Accurate and Compelling Information about Training and Development Opportunities.

1. Review NWS PWD employee participation in existing skill-building training programs, conferences, and seminars.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review PWD participation data for training program by end of Quarter I - FY2008.

2. Promote awareness among NWS PWD employees of opportunities to compete for managerial, executive and upward mobility training.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review procedures for advertising and notifying employees about opportunities and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2009.

3. Review NWS nomination process among PWD and other employees (GS-6 through GS-13) for participation in leadership, and executive potential programs and other developmental programs.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review procedures for advertising and notifying employees about opportunities and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter IV - FY2008.

Goal D: Monitor and Ensure Accountability

The NWS senior-level management is primarily responsible for ensuring and emphasizing efforts to achieve a fully diverse workforce, inclusive of PWD. OEODM, through existing tracking and reporting mechanisms will assist the NWS Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Region Directors, Headquarters Directors, Staff Officers, managers and supervisors in accomplishing workforce diversity by implementing and monitoring workforce profiles and measures. The NWS will use the following action items to promote accountability and results with respect to PWD employment.

1. Periodically update and review organizational PWD workforce goals and achievements.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review goals and accomplishments semiannually.

2. Submit Annual Status Reports to the OEODM Director on NWS progress towards improving the promotion potential of People with Disabilities.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Annually